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A Resource Campaign

# Survive Winter

## Through Self Help and Helping Others

FEMA-16
October 1982

Federal Emergency Management Agency / National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration - U.S. Department of Commerce

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### GOAL: To Save Lives and Reduce Hardship Through Increased Public Awareness of Winter Hazards

Each year, winter leaves behind a wake of death and destruction in much of our nation. Lives and property must be protected from winter's cruel and costly consequences. Past weather patterns tell us that winter storms will continue to be killers. Winter deaths can strike without warning, and often, when people are feeling the economic pinch.

- There were more deaths from excessive cold over the last three decades than from hurricanes, tornadoes and floods combined. The death rate from excessive cold has increased 50% between 1968 and 1978 (National Center for Health Statistics, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services).

- Solid fuel fires from wood and coal have increased 139% between 1977 and 1981, and deaths increased 84% in one year alone (Federal Emergency Management Agency).

- Fatalities resulting from poisoning by gases and vapors during winter months are double that for the rest of the year—improperly installed or defective gas and coal heaters are responsible for many of these fatalities (Metropolitan Life Insurance Company).

- Over 700 deaths between 1980 and 1981 are directly attributable to suffocation and 68% of those during cold weather (National Safety Council).

- Studies demonstrate that there is a significant increase in deaths the week following a major blizzard. Problems of transportation, communication and isolation have made the elderly, infirm, handicapped and poor particularly susceptible to the failures of home heating, inadequate provisions of food and medicine, and emergency transportation (The Center for Disease Control).

- Scientists around the country are looking for temperatures to drop as a result of the April explosion of Mexico's El Chichon volcano, which pumped 20-60 million tons of gas and dust into the stratosphere (Environmental Data and Information Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration).

**YOU CANNOT CHANGE THE WEATHER—BUT YOU CAN AFFECT ITS OUTCOME.**

FEM 1.2:

## WINTER KILLS

Unpredictable weather is often the rule rather than the exception, particularly during the winter.

- At least 20 people were killed and 300 injured when a snow and ice storm struck the Southeast in February '82. The storm caused more than 5 million dollars in damage (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration).

- More than 35 people were killed and 1,077 were injured during the course of a January '82 storm in the Pacific Southwest. Damage from snow and flooding cost at least 50 million dollars (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration).

Community officials, weather forecasters and professionals from the Center for Disease Control believe that the winter of '82-83 may go on record as one of the worst of the century. Data indicate that unprepared areas of the country suffered tremendously last winter. Particularly hard hit were the elderly, infirm and economically disadvantaged. This prompted the development of a Winter Mortality Surveillance Program. Among those participating are 16 major metropolitan areas and government agencies.

The medical community is gravely concerned about this winter, and supports Winter Awareness Campaigns. They are worried about the prevalence of winter related illnesses and deaths from heart attacks, fires, drowning, asphyxia, car accidents and hypothermia/exposure.

High risk groups must be educated on winter weather issues concerning clothing, transportation, fire safety, exposure, exercise, and provisions.

## FIGHTING BACK

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in conjunction with the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and other organizations, is intensifying its program to alert the public to the problems and dangers of the severe winter weather ahead. "Survive Winter" is a national effort to save lives and reduce unnecessary suffering and property loss.

The thrust of this campaign is to improve the distribution and sharing of public information/education materials on winter safety.

Target groups include those most vulnerable to severe weather—the elderly, handicapped, and economically disadvantaged. New educational tools have been designed to further emphasize home preparedness, the special needs of the elderly and the role of children.

Since those most often victimized by severe weather are least able to help themselves, community prevention programs are needed to relay information and a helping hand to high-risk households. "Survive Winter" is a cost-effective, self-help approach to public safety problem solving.

The level of community knowledge, involvement and preparedness can make the life-or-death difference in coping with winter disasters.

## PLANNED PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

"Survive Winter" identifies and provides program materials. A major objective is to stimulate private-sector involvement in these public service programs.

Program components will include:

1. A SURVIVE WINTER WORKBOOK for those who have already participated in the program. The workbook is divided into five sections:

   - Planners Packet
   - Home and School Information
   - Camera-Ready Materials
   - Media Packet
   - Resources

   This self-help book contains all the tools a community needs to implement a winter survival campaign. Designed for community leaders, campaign coordinators, and public educators, this useful reference book

includes a guide to conducting a campaign and examples of success stories. The section for parents/teachers and families (home and school information) features an array of items:

- Can Your Home Pass the Winter Survival Test?
- Winter Watch for Kids
- Survive Winter Coloring Book
- Christmas Tree Hanger on Tree Safety and Smoke Detectors
- Survive Winter Wisely
- Survive Winter Poster

In addition, the workbook also provides a section with camera-ready public service announcements, posters, and brochures on:

- Winter—Keeping the Heat in and the Fire Out.
- Your Burning Questions Answered.
- Wood—Nature's Housewarming Gift.
- Chimney Fires.
- The Complete Guide to How to Go on Ice and Snow.
- A Winter Hazard for the Old—Accidental Hypothermia.
- Techniques for Cold Water Survival.
- How to Save Money by Insulating Your Home.
- Making Sense Out of Insulation.
- Hypothermia, the Winter Killer.

2. A SURVIVE WINTER RESOURCE KIT includes the WORKBOOK described above plus samples of materials available from other organizations.

3. Community groups can request bulk materials to support their campaigns. Bulk materials will be provided to community groups and organizations to support their campaigns. A FEMA order blank is included in the workbook.

Winter Watch for Kids!
SNOW BALL FIGHTS. SLEDDING DOWN SLOPES. HOLIDAY PRESENTS. BUT, WINTER CAN BE DANGEROUS, TOO, IF YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL.
Fireplaces, woodstoves and space heaters are hot. Don't play too close.
Know where your survival supplies are—flashlight, portable radio, first aid kit, and emergency phone numbers, too.
Have extra blankets handy, maybe one on your bed.
At the store, remind mom or dad to stock up on extras in case a storm strands everyone at home. Don't forget food for energy value.
Dress carefully for playing outdoors—Cap, mittens, scarf and boots.
Even on holidays, Candles in windows are dangerous.
Tell mom or dad if you see any overloaded electrical sockets, and keep the tree away from heat.
If you're tree needs water, feed it.
WINTER ALERT
Listen carefully to weather reports, so you can be prepared with boots, and be home safely before a storm.

Federal Emergency Management Agency
P. O. Box 8181
Washington, D. C. 20024

## WHAT CAN MY ORGANIZATION DO TO HELP ?

- Use the Survive Winter materials to put together a Winter Awareness Program aimed at your organization's membership.
- Offer support to state or local government winter awareness programs, especially through printing or distribution of materials.
- Help coordinate the activities of organizations involved in educating the public about the problems of surviving winter: civil defense, fire departments, emergency services office, volunteer organizations, churches, business organizations, community service agencies, welfare agencies, utility companies, news media, and others.
- Help obtain participation of the governor, mayor, or county commissioner by securing the official's signature on a Winter Survival Day Proclamation.
- Share your organization's experiences with winter survival preparedness with your local news media.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION....

Contact:

Federal Emergency Management
Office of Public Afrairs
Survive Winter
Washington, D.C. 20472

National Oceanic and Atmospheric
Administration
Office of Public Affairs
Gramax Building
8060 13th Street
Silver Spring, MD 20910

NOTE: IF YOU CONTACTED FEMA LAST YEAR...

Communities or organizations which received a winter survival kit or materials last year will automatically receive a workbook this year, unless they request otherwise. Workbooks will be mailed to last year's campaign participants by early November.